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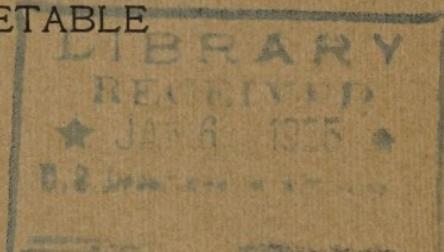


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# RECIPES FOR THE DASHEEN

A DELICIOUS AND NUTRITIOUS

VEGETABLE

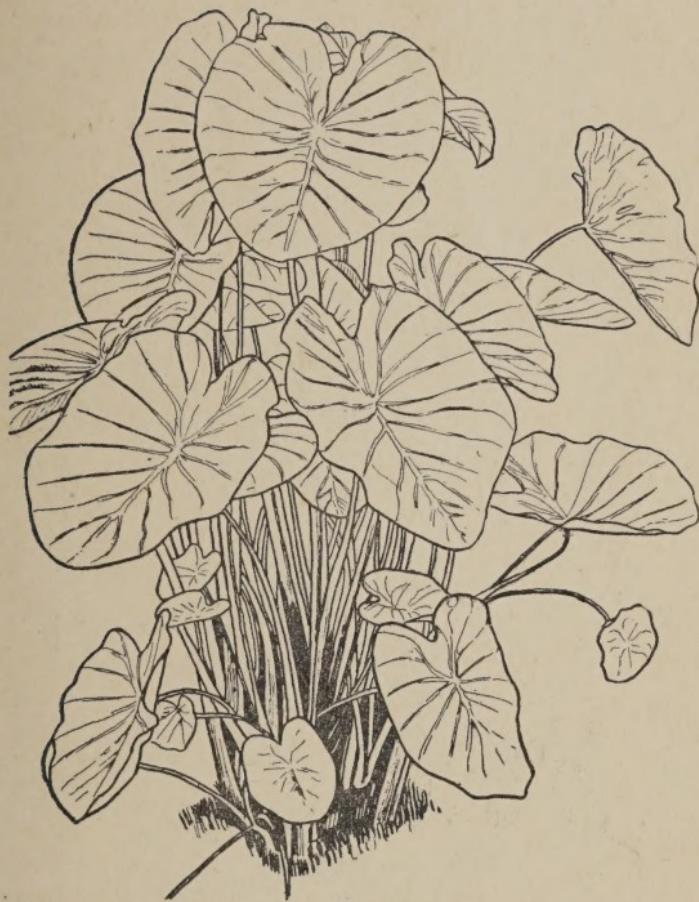


In food value and uses the dasheen closely resembles the potato. Like the potato the dasheen can be served in many pleasing forms. In addition the dasheen has some qualities which are distinctive and valuable.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY  
OFFICE OF FOREIGN SEED AND PLANT  
INTRODUCTION

Washington  
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A growing hill of dasheens.

## THE DASHEEN.

The dasheen is a delicious vegetable recently introduced into culture in the southern states. The taro, of which this is an especially fine flavored variety, furnishes the staple food of millions of people in tropical and sub-tropical countries. Various parts

of the plant are edible, but the principal food is furnished by the large, spherical *corm*, or central "tuber," and a number of smaller *tubers* which are

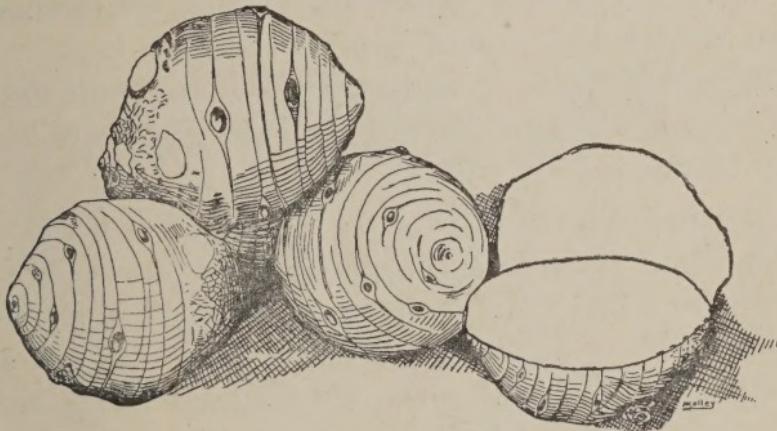


A hill of dasheens. The large central CORM, with part of leaf stems still attached, is surrounded by the TUBERS, just as they grow.

attached to it in the ground. If the suggestions made here regarding preparation and prompt serving

are carefully followed, the dasheen cannot fail to please.

It is usually mealy in texture and slightly nutty in flavor, and the taste for it grows on one. The dasheen and the potato are very similar in composition, food value, and uses, each of them containing starch as the principal nutritive substance though there is also in each of them an appreciable amount of protein and, as compared with other foods, a good proportion of mineral matter.



Dasheen corms. One is cut in half from top to base, ready for parboiling and baking.

However similar they may be, no two food-stuffs are exactly alike in their nature and uses and the dasheen has some advantages. One of them is its distinctive nutty flavor and another is its very general lightness and dryness when cooked.

A starchy food is a welcome and valuable addition to most of our meals. One reason for using dasheen is that it enables the housekeeper to vary the starchy foods without unusual labor or unusual expense.

One of the most popular ways of cooking the dasheen corms is the following:

Parboil for 10 to 15 minutes and then bake in a *moderately quick* oven. If a corm weighs 2 pounds or more, cut it in half *from top to base*, to reduce the time of baking. About the same time is required as for potatoes of the same size—possibly less. Do not bake so long nor so quickly as to char the skin. Use a fork or knitting needle to test. The interior varies from white to cream, grayish or violet when cooked.

When done the dasheens should be opened at once to let the steam escape, placed in a warm dish, covered with a napkin, and served *immediately*. Season the same as potatoes, except that more butter may be needed.

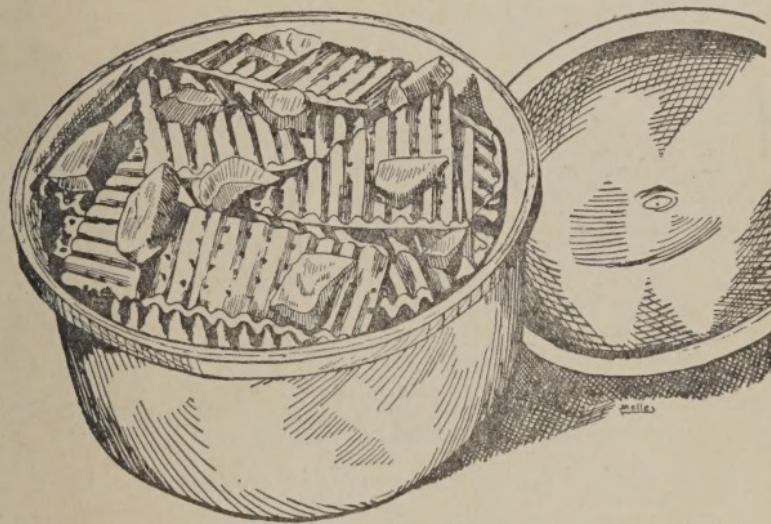
If desired, the fibrous skin may be scrubbed or scraped off before boiling, and if the corms are not baked too long the soft crust formed will be of delicious flavor. A level teaspoonful of *sal soda* should be added to the water in which the scraping is done, to prevent irritation to the hands.

Dasheens dug less than a month may burst open and become water-soaked if cooked entirely by boiling, but later in the season boiling is often a quite satisfactory way of cooking, if baking is not convenient.

The foregoing directions refer particularly to the dasheen *corms*, but the *tubers*, which are usually much smaller, are prepared in much the same way except that they are cooked and served whole. Plain boiled dasheens are better if the skin is not removed until

they are cooked. Promptness in serving is requisite here as in the case of baked dasheens.

Boiled dasheens may be served plain with skin removed, or, in the case of small tubers, be placed in the oven just long enough to melt over them a dressing of butter. The latter method is particularly good because the dasheens can be kept warm longer without becoming too dry. They may also be served in the skin, if desired. The water for boiling may be salted. Boiled dasheens, warm or cold, are excellent when fried quickly with plenty of fat.



A dish of scalloped dasheens, buttered, ready for baking.

Scalloped dasheens make an exceedingly delicious dish; it is especially attractive when prepared from lattice-work slices made with a fluted vegetable slicer. The dish is prepared in the same way as scalloped potatoes except that no flour is required and less time is needed for cooking. Either corms or tubers may be used and should not be previously

cooked. It is usually best in the case of the corms, however, to cut away about one inch of the upper or bud end, as the texture in that part may be a little hard.

Dasheen crisps are especially recommended. They are made by cutting the raw dasheens into lattice-work slices as for scalloped dasheens, or into fluted slices, and frying slowly to a light brown in deep fat.

Dasheens may be prepared in practically all the ways in which either white or sweet potatoes are



A field of dasheen as grown in central Florida.

prepared, including candying. Plain mashed dasheens are not altogether satisfactory, but if put through a strong potato ricer, they are better. They may be French fried, creamed, boiled and made into salad, used as filling for fowl and other meats, and made into soup, pie, or pudding. Grated raw and used with two to three parts of wheat flour, they make excellent griddle cakes.

A descriptive circular on the dasheen, giving numerous detailed recipes and the methods of its cultivation, is published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, and is obtainable upon request.

